

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 ONY-00 /019 W

-----011613 081217Z /50R

O 080945Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6511

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 2709

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: RDEV RH US UK

SUBJ: RHODESIAN PROPOSALS: SOME THOUGHTS

REF: STATE 212757 (NOTAL)

1. THE INITIAL REACTION TO OUR RHODESIA PROPOSAL WAS SOMEWHAT MORE FAVORABLE THAN WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED. THOUGH SMITH DEPRECATED IT, HE DID NOT REJECT IT. MUZOREWA PUBLICLY ACCEPTED MUCH OF IT AND SITHOLE TOOK A SURPRISINGLY FORTHRIGHT STAND IN REJECTING AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT POSITION WAS ABOUT AS EXPECTED--CRITICAL OF SOME ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN BUT NOT REJECTING ALL. THE FRONTLINE POSITION WAS PROBABLY MORE POSITIVE THAN EXPECTED AND OTHER AFRICANS, ASIANS, AND EUROPEANS TOOK A DECIDEDLY POSITIVE AND SUPPORTING ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT.

2. WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE APRIL WHEN THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE ARMED STRUGGLE. ANY TALK OF NEGOTIATION WAS CRITICIZED
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OR RIDICULED BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND FRONTLINE. GENEVA AND IVOR RICHARD HAD FAILED AND NOTHING HAD BEEN PRODUCED TO TAKE ITS PLACE. NOW WE HAVE A PROPOSAL ON THE TABLE, A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT FROM MANY, AND A REJECTION FROM NONE. THERE IS AN INTEREST IN THE PROPOSAL, SUPPORT FOR IT FROM SOME, AND A RECOGNITION BY ALL THAT IT IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE PICTURE.

3. IT SEEMS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT WE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING, MAINTAIN THE INITIATIVE IN OUR OWN HANDS AND REFUSE TO PERMIT THE CRITICISM WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE FORTH-COMING TO DETER US FROM PUSHING ON.

4. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WAYS WE CAN KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING AND THE INITIATIVE IN OUR HANDS IS BY MOVING AHEAD WITH PLANNING ON PRESSURES. WE SHOULD SHARE OUR THINKING--IN GENERAL TERMS ONLY--WITH THE FRONTLINE. THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR PURPOSE AND KEEP THEM BEHIND THE INITIATIVE. EVEN THE MILDEST OF PRESSURES -MANDATORY ARMS EMBARGO--TAKES ON SUBSTANCE AND MEANING WHEN SPELLED OUT IN DETAIL. WE WILL, OF COURSE, NEED TO BE PREPARED TO GO BEYOND THIS INTO THE OIL AREA. AGAIN, WORKING OUT THE DETAILS OF OUR PLAN WILL IMPRESS PEOPLE. WE DON'T NEED TO SHARE ALL THESE DETAILS WITH THE AFRICANS. BUT WE DO NEED TO GIVE THEM SOME IDEA OF HOW WE INTEND TO PROCEED.

5. IN OUR VIEW, WE SHOULD MOVE AHEAD IN THE UN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BEFORE OPPOSITION TO WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO HAS A CHANCE TO CONSOLIDATE ITSELF. AT THE SAME TIME WE SHOULD BE THINKING HOW TO PUSH AHEAD IF WE ARE BLOCKED IN THE UN. THOUGH IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE

TO HAVE UN REPRESENTATION AT THE MILITARY LEVEL TALKS, THIS IS NOT INDISPENSABLE AND WE SHOULD PLAN TO INITIATE THESE TALKS EVEN IF ONLY BETWEEN THE THREE PARTIES: LIBERATION AND DEFENSE FORCE COMMANDERS AND RESIDENT COMMISSIONER DESIGNATE.
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6. IN THE MEANTIME, IT IS LIKELY THAT BOTH THE NATIONALISTS AND SMITH WILL FIND FAULT WITH SPECIFIC PARTS OF THE PROPOSAL AND RAISE THEM TO PUBLIC CRITICISM. THE RHODESIANS SAID THEY HAD A NUMBER OF POINTS TO RAISE WITH US ON THE CONSTITUTION. WE SHOULD RECONFIRM THROUGH BRITISH REPRESENTATION IN SALISBURY AND OUR OWN EMBASSY IN PRETORIA TO HAWKINS THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANY REASONABLE POINTS THEY WISH TO RAISE ON THE CONSTITUTION OR OTHER NEGOTIABLE PROVISIONS OF THE PROPOSAL.

7. THE NATIONALISTS HAVE GIVEN SCANT ATTENTION TO THE CONSTITUTION. NOW THAT IT IS SET OUT, WE CAN EXPECT THEY WILL BEGIN QUESTIONING SOME OF ITS PROVISIONS. I BELIEVE THE STRONGEST OBJECTIONS WILL BE VOICED AGAINST THE ENTRENCHMENT PROVISION WHICH, IN EFFECT, DENIES

THE POSSIBILITY OF AMENDING KEY PROVISIONS OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS (PROPERTY PROTECTION) FOR FIVE YEARS. AS LONG AS THE NATIONALISTS FELT THEY COULD CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION SHORTLY AFTER ACHIEVING POWER, THEY WERE NOT INCLINED TO CHALLENGE ITS PROVISIONS TOO FORCEFULLY. WHEN THEY FIND THAT THEY ARE LOCKED IN FOR A RATHER LONGER PERIOD OF TIME, THEY MAY ATTACK IT MORE STRONGLY. I BELIEVE THEY WILL STICK ON THIS POINT WHICH WILL HAVE TO COMPRO-

MISED BEFORE A SETTLEMENT CAN BE REACHED--PERHAPS REDUCTION TO TWO OR THREE YEARS. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF PRIMARY DEPENDENCE ON THE POLICE FORCE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

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8. WE BELIEVE THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT SMITH MIGHT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MILITARY LEVEL TALKS SINCE HE UNDERSTANDS HE IS NOT

COMMITTING HIMSELF TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL BY SO DOING. HE WOULD SIMPLY BE KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN AND GIVING HIMSELF MORE TIME. A MAJOR PROBLEM IN THESE TALKS WOULD BE THE DIVISION BETWEEN ZANU AND ZAPU OVER THE LIBERATION COMPONENT OF THE ARMY OF INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. DESIRABLE AS THE CREATION OF AN IMPARTIAL AND UNIFIED ARMED FORCE BY INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE, I WONDER WHETHER THE ONLY BASIS FOR AGREEMENT MAY NOT TURN OUT TO BE A TRIPARTITE FORCE UNDER ONE COMMANDER CONSISTING OF ONE THIRD EACH OF ZANU, ZAPU, AND THE RHODESIAN DEFENSE FORCES. SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD ALLOW EACH OF THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS THE ASSURANCE THAT A FORCE OF THEIR OWN REMAINS IN EXISTENCE WHICH COULD BE CALLED UPON IN EXTREMIS. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE THREE ELEMENTS COULD BE GRADUALLY INCREASED DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD, WITH SOME EXCHANGES AND LIAISON HAVING BEEN ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENCE.

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9. PUBLIC U.S. INVOLVEMENT DURING THE FORTHCOMING PERIOD WILL BE MUCH LESS EVIDENT THAN PREVIOUSLY. PRESENTATION TO THE UN WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BRITISH. CURRENT COMMUNICATION WITH THE RHODESIAN REGIME IS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BRITISH THROUGH THE REPRESENTA-

TIVES THEY "LEFT BEHIND" IN SALISBURY. THE MILITARY LEVEL TALKS INCLUDE THE UN AND BRITISH REPS AS WELL AS THOSE OF OPPOSING MILITARY FORCES, BUT NOT THE U.S. THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID FOR BRITISH PROMINANCE AND A LOWER U.S. PROFILE DURING THIS PERIOD. HOWEVER, WE WILL WANT TO BE CAREFUL THAT WE ARE NOT SENDING THE WRONG KINDS OF SIGNALS AND GIVING AN IMPRESSION OF LAGGING U.S. INTEREST IN THE INITIATIVE. WE SHOULD PROBABLY ESTABLISH SOME MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE RHODESIANS, EITHER THROUGH PRETORIA OR OCCASIONAL VISITS TO SALISBURY. WE MUST REMAIN IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION WITH THE FRONTLINE TO AVOID THE KINDS OF MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE LAST FEW WEEKS. WE WILL WANT TO BE ALERT TO OTHER WAYS OF PUBLICLY DEMONSTRATING OUR CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN AS TIME GOES ON.

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LOBBYING, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT
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Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: LUSAKA
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 77 STATE 212757
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1350061
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIAN PROPOSALS: SOME THOUGHTS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, US, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b26eaa4a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009